

# THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA

Report by – SARAH-GRACE WILLIAMS – 2010 Churchill Fellow

The STUART and NORMA LESLIE Churchill Fellowship to undertake lessons and assist renowned conductors and leading European and American Orchestras - UK, Germany, Russia, Ukraine, Norway, USA

I understand that the Churchill Trust may publish this Report, either in hard copy or on the internet or both, and consent to such publication.

I indemnify the Churchill Trust against any loss, costs or damages it may suffer arising out of any claim or proceedings made against the Trust in respect of or arising out of the publication of any Report submitted to the Trust and which the Trust places on a website for access over the internet.

I also warrant that my Final Report is original and does not infringe the copyright of any person, or contain anything which is, or the incorporation of which the Final Report is, actionable for defamation, a breach of any privacy law or obligation, breach of confidence, contempt of court, passing-off or contravention of any other private right or of any law.

Signed

Dated

Sarah-Grace Williams

20 May 2011

## Index

INTRODUCTION .....	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	4
HIGHLIGHTS.....	4
MAJOR LESSONS AND CONCLUSIONS.....	4
IMPLEMENTATION and DISSEMINATION.....	4
FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM.....	5
MAIN BODY .....	8
1. DESCRIPTION OF FELLOWSHIP .....	8
2. CONSIDERATIONS OF A CONDUCTOR.....	9
3. OTHER .....	16
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	19

## INTRODUCTION

The Stuart and Norma Leslie Churchill Fellowship enabled me to observe, assist and study with leading conductors, orchestras and opera houses in New York (USA), Amsterdam (Netherlands), London (UK), Berlin (Germany), Hamburg (Germany) and Kiev (Ukraine).

The saturation of orchestras and concerts throughout these areas, allowed me to attend more than 100 rehearsals and some 28 concerts of exemplary standard. This access gave me an insight into many areas such as:

- Effective Rehearsal Management and Structure.  
*For example*  
*How do different conductors use their time in rehearsal?*  
*How do they communicate with the musicians in rehearsal?*  
*Score preparation*
- Effective Conducting technique.
- The relationships between various conductors and musicians, both on and off the concert stage.
- Different programming strategies of each orchestras, including education programs.

Additionally, my fellowship allowed me to undertake an intense period of study with Maestro Alexander Polishchuk (Professor of Conducting, St Petersburg Conservatoire) in Kiev, Ukraine.

This project was made possible by Mrs Norma Leslie and The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sarah-Grace Williams

65 Burwood Rd, Concord NSW 2137 Ph: 61 414 661 554

Chief Conductor & Artistic Director – Metropolitan Chamber Orchestra

The STUART and NORMA LESLIE Churchill Fellowship to undertake lessons and assist renowned conductors and leading European and American Orchestras - UK, Germany, Ukraine, USA

### HIGHLIGHTS

KIEV, UKRAINE

- Act as Stager Conductor to Maestro Alexander Polishchuk - Ukraine National Opera and Ballet Theatre.
- Undertake intensive lessons daily with Maestro Alexander Polishchuk at the Conservatory
- Observation and attendance for rehearsals and concert for Rachmaninoff Festival

BERLIN, GERMANY

- 1 month attendance and observance of rehearsals and concerts with Berlin Philharmonic for several concert programs, under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle. Program highlights – Mahler Symphony no 3 and 4.
- Meetings with Franziska Noack (Education Project Manager) to discuss Berlin Philharmonic's leading Education program.
- Rehearsal and/or concert attendance of Runfunk Sinfonie Orchester (Marek Janowski), Das Sinfonie Orchester (under Stanley Dodds)

HAMBURG, GERMANY

- Observance of rehearsals and performance of 'Trilogie' with Hamburg Staatsoper, under the baton with Simone Young. Period involved meetings and guidance from Ms Young also.

LONDON, United Kingdom

- Observance of entire rehearsal period of 'Lucrezia Borgia' by Donizetti with English National Opera, under the baton of Maestro Paul Daniel. Period involved meetings and guidance from Mr Daniel also.
- Observance of several rehearsal periods and production with the Royal Ballet, Covent Garden, with the guidance of Music Director Barry Wordsworth.
- Shorter periods of rehearsal observation and concert attendance with conductors such as Valery Gergiev, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Yennick Nezet-Seguín, Valery Jurowski, with London Symphony, London Philharmonic, London Philharmonia.
- Meeting with management of London Philharmonic, London Philharmonia and London Southbank Sinfonia to discuss orchestral models, programming and ways forward in the current orchestral climate.

NEW YORK, United States

- Rehearsal observation and concert attendance of New York Philharmonic, under direction of Chief Conductor Alan Gilbert.
  - Rehearsal observation of new production of La Traviata at the Metropolitan Opera, under the baton of Giandrea Nosedà
  - Concert attendance of Metropolitan Opera with Sir Simon Rattle and New York Ballet with Fayçal Karoui
- AMSTERDAM, Netherlands
- Observance of rehearsals and/or concerts with Netherlands Radio Orchestra (with James Judd), Chamber Orchestra of Europe (with Bernard Haitink) Concertgebouw Orchester (with Semyon Bychkov)

### MAJOR LESSONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This period of intense study and observation allowed me to gain a clearer insight into effective and efficient conducting technique, rehearsal structure and concert programming as well as the need to continually rethink and reinvent how we present and market our orchestral performances in order to keep our industry vibrant and viable as we move into the future. Our music needs to be here for the people, not just the musicians and in order to develop and maintain a wider audience, the accessibility of our performances needs to be constantly addressed. I would like to see Australian conductors become leaders in the future of Australian orchestras. A significant gap that must be addressed is the lack of advanced practical, theoretical and musical training for conductors at postgraduate level. Currently, Australian conductors must travel abroad for this study and as a result many do not return.

### IMPLEMENTATION and DISSEMINATION

It is my intention to implement knowledge and skills I gained in this period in my capacity as Artistic Director of the Metropolitan Chamber Orchestra (Sydney) through my upcoming professional engagements as Guest Conductor across Australia. Additionally, I will share my knowledge with the next generation of conductors through my capacity as conducting lecturer and teacher.

## FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

ORCHESTRA and CONDUCTOR	DETAILS	CONCERT PROGRAM
<b>NEW YORK, United States of America</b> <b>20 Dec 2010 – 2 Jan 2011</b>		
<b>NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC</b> <b>Conductor: Alan Gilbert</b> AVERY FISHER HALL, LINCOLN CENTRE	Observation of rehearsals and concert attendance  Concert: Dec 28 7.30pm	Tchaikovsky: Polonaise – Eugene Onegin, Sibelius: Valse Triste Tchaikovsky: Excerpts from Nutcracker Vivaldi: Concerto for 4 violins <i>Violins: Sheryl Staples, Michelle Kim, Marc Ginsberg, Lisa Kim</i> Debussy: Lapres Midi Ravel: Bolero
<b>NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC</b> <b>Conductor: Alan Gilbert</b> AVERY FISHER HALL, LINCOLN CENTRE	Observation of rehearsals	Polonaise – Eugene Onegin Nutcracker – Act II complete Piano Concerto no 1 – <i>Soloist: Lang Lang</i>
<b>NEW YORK CITY BALLET</b> <b>Conductor: Fayçal Karoui</b> DAVID H. KOCH THEATRE, LINCOLN CENTRE	Performance attendance: Dec 22, 2pm	Tchaikovsky: Nutcracker
<b>METROPOLITAN OPERA</b> <b>Conductor: Sir Simon Rattle</b> METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE	Performance attendance: Dec 23, 8pm	Debussy: Pelléas and Mélisande <i>Mélisande: Magdalena Kozena</i> <i>Prince Goloud: Gerard Finley</i>
<b>METROPOLITAN OPERA</b> <b>Conductor: Fabio Luisi</b> METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE	Attendance of rehearsals. (Season not yet opened)	Verdi: La Traviata NEW PRODUCTION by Willy Decker <i>Violetta: Marina Poplovskaia Alfredo: Matthew Polenzani</i> <i>Germont: Andrzej Dobber</i>
<b>NEW YORK STRING ORCHESTRA</b> <b>Conductor: Jaime Laredo</b> CARNEGIE HALL	Performance attendance: Dec 24, 7.30pm	Mozart: Così Fan Tutti Overture Mendelssohn: Conc for Vln & Pno Mozart: Symphony no 31 <i>Violin: Jennifer Koh Piano: Benjamin Hochman</i>
<b>AMSTERDAM, HOLLAND</b> <b>2 Jan- 14 Jan 2011</b>		
<b>ROYAL CONCERTGEBOUW ORCHESTRA</b> <b>Conductor: Semyon Bychkov</b> CONCERTGEBOUW	Performance attendance: January 7, 8.15pm	Bruch Violin Concerto Shostakovich Symphony no 11 <i>Violin: Joshua Bell</i>
<b>CHAMBER ORCHESTRA OF EUROPE</b> <b>Conductor: Bernard Haitink</b> CONCERTGEBOUW	Performance attendance: January 12, 8.15pm	Beethoven Fidelio Overture Beethoven Symphony no 8 Beethoven Symphony no 5
<b>RUSSIAN STATE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA</b> <b>Conductor: Alex Smirnov</b> CONCERTGEBOUW	Performance attendance: January 9, 8.15pm	Chabrier: Espana Rodrigo: Fantasia para un gentilhombre Bizet: Carmen suite 1 & 2 Rodrigo: Concerto de Aranjuez Falla: El Amor Brujo <i>Guitar: Rolando Saad</i>
<b>NETHERLANDS RADIO ORCHESTRA</b> Conductor: James Judd CONCERTGEBOUW	Rehearsal and performance attendance and meeting with conductor James Judd  Concert: January 7 8.15pm	Roslavets In den Stunden des Neumonds Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto no 3  <i>Piano: Nicholas Angelich</i>

<b>LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM</b> <b>15 Jan – 30 Jan 2011</b>		
<b>LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA</b> <b>Conductor: Valery Gergiev</b> BARBICAN HALL	Performance attendance: January 18 7.30 pm	Shostakovich Violin Concerto no 2 Tchaikovsky Symphony no 1 <i>Violin: Sergei Khachatryan</i>
<b>LONDON PHILHARMONIC</b> <b>Conductor: Yennick Nezet-Seguín</b> ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL	Rehearsal and Performance attendance. Concert: January 19 8 pm	Beethoven Piano Concerto no 5 Mahler Symphony no 5 <i>Piano: Nicholas Angelich</i>
<b>LONDON PHILHARMONIC</b> <b>Conductor: Yennick Nezet-Seguín</b> ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL	Rehearsal and Performance attendance. Concert: January 22 8pm	Frank Symphony in D Faure Requiem
<b>LONDON PHILHARMONIC</b> <b>Conductor: Valery Jurowski</b> ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL	Rehearsal attendance	Eotvos Shadows, Liszt Pno Concerto no 2 <i>Piano: Alexander Markovich</i> Zemlinsky Lyric Symphony
<b>LONDON PHILHARMONIC</b> <b>Conductor: Valery Jurowski</b> ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL	Rehearsal and Performance attendance. Concert: January 29 7.30pm	Ligeti Lontano, Bartok Violin Concerto no1 <i>Violin: Barnabas Kelemen</i> Mahler Das Klagende Lied
<b>PHILHARMONIA</b> <b>Conductor: Esa-Pekka Salonen</b> ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL	Rehearsal and Performance attendance. Concert: January 27 7.30pm	Bartok Kossuth, Bartok Piano concerto no 1 <i>Piano: Yefim Bronfman</i> Bartok The Miraculous Mandarin
<b>ENGLISH NATIONAL OPERA</b> <b>Conductor: Paul Daniel</b> London Coliseum (Sitz probe: St Lukes)	Rehearsal attendance across 2 weeks: Orchestral Sitzprobe Stage-Piano Stage-Orchestral Dress Rehearsal  Meetings with conductor Paul Daniel	Donizetti: Lucrezia Borgia English translation: Paul Daniel Director: Mike Figgis  Claire Rutter (Lucrezia Borgia); Michael Fabiano (Gennaro); Elizabeth DeShong (Maffio Orsini); Alastair Miles (Alfonso d'Este)
<b>ROYAL BALLET, Covent Garden</b> <b>Conductor: Valeriy Ovsyanikov</b>	Attend dress rehearsal	Swan Lake <i>Odette/Odile: Sarah Lamb</i> <i>Prince Siegfried: Federico Bonelli</i>
<b>ROYAL BALLET, Covent Garden</b> <b>Conductor and Musical Director: Barry Wordsworth</b>	Rehearsal attendance  Meetings with Music Director Barry Wordsworth	Giselle Alice
<b>SOUTHBANK SINFONIA</b> <b>Conductor: Simon Over</b> St Lukes, Waterloo	Rehearsal and concert attendance  Meetings with Music Director Simon Over. Concert: January 27, 6pm	Mendelssohn Hebrides Haydn Trumpet Conc <i>Trumpet: Crispian Steele-Perkin</i> Mozart Symph 38

<b>BERLIN, GERMANY</b> <b>30 Jan – 7 Feb 2011</b>		
<b>BERLINER PHILHAROMONIKER</b> plus Ladies of Rundfunkchor, Berlin and Boys of Staats-und Domchor Berlin <b>Conductor: Simon Rattle</b> Chorusmasters: Simon Halsey(Rundfunk) Kai-Uwe Jirka (staats und dom)  PHILHARMONIE, Berlin	Attendance of all rehearsals and concert  Concert: February 3, 8pm	Hugo Wolf, Elfenlied, Brahms, Es tönt ein voller Harfenklang, Mahler Symphony 3 d-Moll  <i>Wolf: Anke Herrmann (sop)</i> <i>Mahler: Nathalie Stutzmann (contrato)</i>
<b>BERLINER SIBELIUS ORCHESTRA</b> <b>Conductor:</b> Elias Grandy KONCERTHAUS, Berlin	Concert attendance: February 6, 8pm	Dvorak: Cello Concerto Cello:Jacob Spahn Shostakovich: Symphony no 10
<b>HAMBURG, GERMANY</b> <b>7 Jan – 11 Feb 2011</b>		
<b>HAMBURG STAATSOPER</b> <b>Conductor: Simone Young</b> STAATSOPER	Rehearsal and concert attendance plus meetings with Simone Young  Concert: February 10 8pm	Trilogie der Frauen: Schoenberg – Erwartung Strasnoy – La Bal Rihm. – Das Gehege Soloists: Matthew Jocelyn, Alain Lagarde, Deborah Polaski Trine W. Lund, Mirian Gordon-Stewart, Peter Galliard, Ann- Beth Solvang, Miriam Clark, Moritz Gogg, Hellen Kwon, Marco Stickle
<b>BERLIN, GERMANY</b> <b>12 Feb – 20 Feb 2011</b>		
<b>Berliner Philharmoniker</b> <b>Chamber Music Concert</b> <b>Conductor: Simon Rattle</b>  KAMMERMUSIKAAL	Attendance of concert  Concert: February 13, 8pm	Schubert – Quartet Mvt in C min Schoenberg – String Quartet no 2 in F#m with Soprano Mahler – Piano Quartet mvt in A min Schoenberg Chamber Symphony no 1 <i>Soprano: Anna Prohaska</i> <i>Piano: Bishara Harouni</i>
<b>BERLINER PHILHAROMONIKER</b> <b>Conductor: Simon Rattle</b> PHILHARMONIE, Berlin	Rehearsals and concert attendance Concert: February 15, 8pm	Haydn Symphony 99 Howokava –Concerto for Horn & Orchestra Schubert Symph no 8 <i>Horn: Stefan Dohr</i>
<b>BERLINER PHILHAROMONIKER</b> <b>Conductor: Simon Rattle</b> PHILHARMONIE, Berlin	Rehearsals and concert attendance Concert: February 16, 8pm	Strawinski, Apollon Musagète Mahler Symphony 4 <i>Soprano: Christine Schäfer</i>
<b>DAS SINFONIE ORCHESTER</b> <b>Conductor: Stanley Dodds</b> PHILHARMONIE, Berlin	Attendance of concert: February 19, 8pm	Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky Romeo and Juliet, Fantasy Overture after Shakespeare Piano Concerto No. 1 in B flat minor <i>Piano: Mario Häring</i> Symphony No. 5 in E minor
<b>KIEV, UKRAINE</b> <b>20 Feb – 6 March 2011</b>		
<b>Ukraine National Opera</b> <b>Soloists, Chorus &amp; Orchestra</b> <b>Conductor: Roman Kofman</b> <b>Chorusmaster: Leo Venediktov</b>	Rehearsals and concert attendance Concert: February 24 7pm	RACHMANINOFF FESTIVAL <i>Vesna</i> ("Spring") Cantata for Baritone, Chorus, and Orchestra, Op. 20 "Bells", Choral Symphony Op. 35
<b>CONSERVATORY OF UKRAINE</b>	Intense private lessons with Maestro Alexander Polishchuk	

## MAIN BODY

### 1. DESCRIPTION OF FELLOWSHIP

As outlined in my program, the basis of my fellowship was to attend, observe and/or assist intensive rehearsal periods and concerts with various leading conductors and orchestras. Normally closed to the general public, being granted access to these periods, allowed me to gain a deep insight into rehearsal and conducting technique as displayed by the best. I was very fortunate that the likes of Sir Simon Rattle, Simone Young, Alexander Polishchuk, Paul Daniel and James Judd not only granted me access to their rehearsal rooms but also took the time to share their knowledge with me in conversation, lesson or demonstration.

Additionally, I undertook intense lessons with Maestro Alexander Polishchuk at the Kiev Conservatorium in the Ukraine. These lessons lasted up to 4 hours a day, conducting an array of repertoire with 2 répétiteurs, focussing strongly on technique, interpretation and tradition. I first had a lesson with Maestro Polishchuk 10 years ago (in Russia) before my professional conducting career. It was a wonderful experience being able to show him who I am now and for him to challenge me further and provide me with tools as I move into the next phase of my career.

I have already conducted some of the repertoire I worked on in Kiev with Maestro Polishchuk in concert since returning to Australia and most certainly believe I am bringing something different to my music making since my trip. I feel that through the combination of observing such fine conductors and orchestras and having such intense one-on-one lessons, I have a broader vision, a clearer technique and a more thorough understanding of my craft.

The main body of this paper discusses the major lessons I learnt during my fellowship. On occasion I will refer to a conductor or orchestra, however for privacy reasons I feel it important to not discuss specifics of what happened behind closed rehearsal doors, and rather discuss what I gained from these experiences.

## 2. CONSIDERATIONS OF A CONDUCTOR

### *Rehearsal Structure – Time Management*

In preparing logistically for any rehearsal with an orchestra, several things need to be taken into consideration to best utilise the time and player resources. It is apparent from the beginning of a rehearsal if a conductor has a well thought out plan.

Of the hundreds of different rehearsals I watched during my fellowship, I found the most efficient rehearsals were structured to begin with the pieces on the program that had the largest orchestration, moving through to the smallest, allowing those not involved to be dismissed.

However, following this rule alone can cause problems. I observed in some instances, that conductors had put all the heavy, demanding pieces/movements one after another (as they had the same large instrumentation), however they did not take into consideration that it was very taxing on the players and the music suffered for this. It is important to prepare with a balance in mind.

It is also greatly appreciated by musicians who do very little in a certain piece when a conductor takes this into consideration. Tuba players are joined by other musicians who often have little to do in a particular piece, and they accept that this is the way it is and expect a certain amount of sitting around waiting, but this patience turns quickly to annoyance when they sit in a rehearsal and play not a single note before the first tea break. This is valuable time when that musician could have been in another room practising or otherwise. Musicians very much appreciate when a conductor takes this into consideration by advising the musician that they will need to attend rehearsal a little later. This not only pleases the musician, but allows a conductor to focus on other aspects without being conscious that they need to move on to give these musicians something to do.

Some conductors do not take this into consideration, but worse, some conductors simply do not know the score well enough and don't realise that they have someone sitting there doing nothing. Knowing the instrumentation of a piece is not enough, you need to understand the usage of the instruments during the work. This can only be achieved by thorough score study. For instance, the tuba appears

on the front score of many pieces of music, but often does little in the work such as in Poulenc's Gloria, where they play only 26 notes, or worse, only 17 notes in the whole of Dvorak's 'New World' Symphony. A conductor should be aware of these small things before beginning rehearsal which is all part of the score preparation process.

Of course, with a room of sixty or more musicians, we can't always cater for everyone, but the rehearsal schedule should be thought through very carefully to make the most of the available time and resources.

### ***Score Preparation***

It goes without saying that thorough score preparation is absolutely essential for the success of any rehearsal. Preparation involves a great deal of analysis of phrase and harmonic structures as well as research into the work and composer. After this amount of focussed time with a score, conductors should have a clear idea of their musical intention and a means of how to achieve this intention.

I found it interesting to watch the way different conductors relay their ideas to the orchestra. It was very interesting that some of the conductors observed picked their moments to colour the music with their interpretation and also knew when it was not necessary to 'reinvent the wheel'. On several occasions, some conductors hardly rehearsed anything on a piece before moving to the next. What they heard was good and they left it alone, not feeling the need to change it and make it their own. Some younger conductors will often make the mistake of trying to come up with a completely new interpretation or approach to a piece of music that has been played hundreds of times by an orchestra before under far more experienced conductors. Although the performance may be fine by the orchestra, many still felt the need to rehearse and rehearse, as if to prove themselves and make their mark. The result often was an annoyed orchestra and a lesser quality performance than the first run through in rehearsal.

It is a fine balance that is needed and the understanding of this balance clearly grows with experience.

## ***Rehearsal Technique***

### a) Conducting Technique

Like any form of body language, no two conductors have the same technique and it is hard to define 'good' technique. A conductor's responsibility is to do far more than prescribe a beat. It is to inspire, influence, encourage and to essentially be a mediator between the printed score and musicians. Sometimes, conductors that are beautiful to watch may not create music to match and vice versa and at other times a conductor may seem to be completely lacking in technique but creates magic in the music. The ideal situation of course is to both have a good technique and have magic.

Technique is something not only learnt and then continually developed, but adapts depending on the orchestra.

However executed, a conducting technique should indicate the musical intent. Rehearsal time is a precious thing and the best conductors use few words during a rehearsal, relying on the clarity of their gesture. Outside tempi, gesture can indicate dynamic, articulation, emotion, balance, phrasing etc, and unfortunately orchestras are often stopped by a conductor to allow them to talk about something they would like to hear, which could easily be shown through their conducting. Not only does this waste time, it disrupts the flow and overall structure of the music.

Allowing musicians to play through the music in its entirety the first time through is also extremely valuable and important. It not only allows musicians to get an idea of the conductor's intention, but allows them to offer something in return.

A good conductor is one that listens to what they are offered and then chooses what to do with it. No two orchestras will play a phrase the same way and sometimes an orchestra may offer the conductor something they had not thought of previously. The music making process can be far more collaborative than some conductors allow.

Additionally, a conductor should conduct the sound they hear in front of them, as opposed to the sound they have in their head. An orchestra can see through pre-rehearsed gestures or gestures for gestures sake, that contain no musical information – these are not organic.

It is important to also know WHEN and WHAT to conduct. Obviously, you never completely stop conducting, however there are times when a conductor needs to give specific direction and times when the most minimal of gestures creates the greatest result. A good conductor knows when to allow the orchestra freedom and step out of their way a little.

One of the most magical moments I saw on my time away was the end Mahler Symphony No. 3 under Sir Simon Rattle with the Berliner Philharmoniker. In the last 10 bars or so, Sir Simon hardly moved, having his arms outstretched and with a look on his face that said to his timpanist ‘I now hand this to you to finish, Mr Seegers’.

Now with that said, there are a number of conductors who seem to be lacking the basic fundamental technique in their conducting. In young conductors this may be expected as they are developing these fundamentals, but in experienced conductors it is a frequent observation. I think in many of these cases, it is a matter of bad habits forming and a lack of self-analysis. Speaking with several of the conductors whom I believe to have outstanding technique, I was pleased to discover that most of them will, from time to time, watch recordings of themselves conducting in rehearsal or concert to analyse what they are doing. One particular conductor (of serious Maestro status) told me he often gets surprised with what he sees – a bad habit forming, an unclear direction which he thought very clear, and so on.

It is one thing to practise technique in the mirror but more often than not, what we do on the podium can be very different and this is where the analysis needs to be made – especially for young conductors. Good conducting technique will never get in the way of the musicians, whereas poor technique certainly will.

## b) Communication

As stated above, talking should be kept to a minimum with music making being the priority. With that said, sometimes a conductor needs to talk and at this point it is imperative that they are able to articulate what they want. Musicians should never be told how to play, but rather given a description of the sound quality they are after. Succinct, unambiguous directions are what the musicians need and want. The conductors that do this best also seem to have a bag of descriptive terms, moods and emotions ready to use to obtain their desired result. Occasionally a conductor may relay a story about the piece, or idea about what a certain phrase means to them, however this too should be short, and most importantly, relevant and helpful.

It is incredibly important that if a conductor does talk that it is done in a respectful manner. Some conductors are natural at this – others dig holes for themselves.

## c) Energy

A conductor needs to exude energy and passion in order to receive the same in return from their musicians. A tired conductor will receive a tired sound. A lazy conductor will receive a lazy sound, whereas, energy and passion are infectious. This does not mean over-the-top flamboyancy, but a true commitment to how they perceive the music and a means to relay it that inspires the musicians. This energy needs to be present from the moment a conductor enters a room, not just when they conduct. The greeting to the orchestra should be short but again, energised.

## d) Efficiency

As mentioned, two imperative factors needed to rehearse efficiently is having a well thought out and structured plan for the use of time, and being able to communicate as much of the musical intention through gesture, rather than stopping to talk.

In addition to this, a conductor needs to have an excellent memory and make decisions very quickly. Sometimes there is something that needs addressing in the music but stopping the flow of the music is not ideal. It is at these times where a conductor should mentally catalogue this point in order to come back and rehearse later. Some conductors use different methods to remember these spots, including dog-earing a page or having a small pile of post-it notes on the roster ready to grab and stick as they are going on. Regardless the method, it is important that time is not wasted whilst a conductor tries to remember what they want to rehearse as stopping for too long can also disrupt the energy of the piece.

## ***Performance Technique***

### a) Stage presence

It is the entrance of the orchestra marks the beginning of the concert – not the first note of music! Unfortunately, too many musicians don't remember this basic fact and enter the stage with a lack of vibrancy or energy. Orchestral musicians need to be encouraged to be more visually appealing when they enter the stage. The audience is seated, staring at the stage, waiting for the beginning, and to see a lacklustre group enter the stage will give a poor start to the concert.

One particular orchestra I spent time with in London, actually has an acting coach come in once a year to work with them on their stage entries. I was fortunate enough to be present at one of these sessions. At first the musicians found this all unnecessary and a bit tedious, but soon took great interest in the coach's guidance. The acting coach essentially gave them a pre-concert pep talk, told them to go out on stage with heads held high, exude happy and present energised faces. The next concert started with an energy that I have rarely witnessed with several audience members later commenting on how much they loved seeing the musicians enjoy themselves because it also enhanced the audience experience.

We need to remember that an audience attends a concert not just to hear the music, but to see and hear the music. If what they see is uninspired, then their experience will be tainted and influenced by this, no matter how good the playing is.

Another thing that a number of orchestras have started to do is have the musicians bow with the conductor at the opening of the concert. When I first saw this I found it unusual, but I quickly became comfortable with it and understood its merit. This gesture in essence acknowledges the concert as a team effort and not being all about the conductor. Again, this is something that many audience members seem to appreciate.

Good posture is paramount in both rehearsal and concert. Many conductors (myself included) choose to sit on a stool in rehearsal. However, it is important to remember that our image reflects directly on the music. If we are slouching and being lazy, the music will sound the same.

Some conductors I witnessed seemed to lack interest in what they were doing, or at least appeared that way. Whether this was the case or not, it definitely had an effect on the music. The musicians sounded disconnected and disinterested in the

conductor and the music. It is not necessary to be flamboyant, and we must always be careful not to over-conduct. It is not about the grandness of a gesture, but more to do with the delivery of it. We must always care primarily about the music and we must always seek to inspire.

Without exception, the most inspiring conductors to watch were the ones which created the most exciting sound.

#### b) Interaction with audience

More and more conductors are taking the time to talk to their audience once they have come onto stage before conducting. Some people don't like this break from tradition. As an audience member I was able to watch and hear the response of many concert goers and it seemed that a large percentage enjoyed this approach, feeling that it added to their overall concert experience. None of the conductors spoke for long, nor did they preach what the audience could already read in their program booklets. This talking was more personal – a welcome and perhaps a personal reflection of why they liked the program or why it was important to them for example. This brief moment of connection with the conductor positively bridges the gap between the audience and the orchestra.

Alan Gilbert of the New York Philharmonic spoke to the audience on the occasion when I was in attendance. There was a change in the program which needed to be explained but rather than just announcing it, he spoke to the audience about his personal love of the works and their connection to him, and their importance to the musical world. Looking around the hall, the audience was beaming at this frank and personal account. They loved hearing the 'maestro' talk. It really brought something special to the beginning of their concert.

On another occasion with Southbank Sinfonia in London, some members of the orchestra spoke. Again, they were not just telling the audience about the music, instead each of them regaled a small anecdote or explained why the piece was important to them and even instructed the audience on what they felt was an important part of the music that the audience should listen for and why it was interesting. This was a very refreshing introduction to the concert which brought the audience closer to the orchestra and had the added benefit of making the orchestra more engaged with the music to come.

Talking isn't always possible, nor is it always appropriate. One needs to pick their time well as talking before a piece may well ruin the atmosphere needed for the music to begin. However, it most certainly is something that engages the audience and when the time is appropriate, this interaction with the audience can be very effective.

### 3. OTHER

#### ***Education programs***

The leading orchestras of the world are also the leaders in education and connecting with young people and musicians alike, our future audiences and orchestra members.

One of the most impressive education programs that I witnessed was that of the Berlin Philharmoniker. Soon after arriving at the Berlin Philharmonic in 2002, Sir Simon Rattle inaugurated an education program called Zukunft@BPhil. (Zukunft means future.)

The fundamental aim of Zukunft@BPhil is to make the activities and music of the Berliner Philharmoniker accessible to as wide an audience as possible and to connect with young musicians, wherever they play. Under the directorship of Catherine Milliken, Zukunft@BPhil offers a number of creative projects which involve young people participating in a variety of musical skills training with members of the orchestra.

It is wonderful to watch an orchestra place such great importance on education and for someone like Sir Simon Rattle to be so proactive in the project. It is often the case where education concerts are 'palmed off' to young conductors and the orchestra is full of casual players, with principal members taking these concerts off. In the Berliner Philharmoniker however, Sir Simon is the leader and visionary for the program with many of the principals playing key roles, such as Sarah Willis (horn), who not only plays but presents many of the programs.

Berliner Philharmoniker has won many awards for projects it has created in its education program. One of the most celebrated projects is a documentary filmed in 2003 called *Rhythm Is It!* It has been shown in cinemas all around the world and is now shown in most German schools as part of their curriculum. This film is not only about great music from the past, but about things that concern all of us including:

- How do young people develop their talents?
- How can creativity change all of our lives?

It was in January 2003, Sir Simon Rattle's first season as principal conductor of the Berliner Philharmoniker, when 250 Berlin school children came together for this unique project. Accompanied by such world-class musicians and trained by choreographer Royston Maldoom, these young people from 25 different national backgrounds danced Stravinsky's *Le Sacre Du Printemps*, one of the most famous ballets of the 20th century.

The documentary follows three of the young dancers during the three-month rehearsal period. In this time they experience highs and lows, insecurity, self-confidence, doubt and enthusiasm: an emotional journey into new undreamed of worlds, discovering sides to themselves they never knew existed.

I was fortunate to meet with a now young man by the name of Stephan that was part of this project. His face lit up when they discussed the project and he proudly showed me that he could still sing the tune! He is now working in the music industry, saying he was greatly inspired by his time with Sir Simon and the Berliner Philharmoniker, who made him believe he could do anything.

This is just one example of the many education projects created by the Berliner Philharmoniker, but it gives a great insight into what can be achieved.

### ***General Programming***

I was able to spend a fair amount of time with artistic directors, planners and general management of many of these orchestras. Although the orchestras each have their own vision and method of music delivery, it was obvious they all agreed that in order for the orchestral musical landscape to thrive, they must attract, educate and secure a wider genre of audience, especially in these difficult financial times.

To reach this potential audience, it is important to apply a fresh and original approach to our programming, concert formats, marketing and accessibility, and break down the barriers that hinder many people from attending these performances. This change is already happening but requires a long-term approach requiring passion and commitment. Each step toward change doesn't have to necessarily be costly or complex, but rather a creation of innovative methods of concert presentations and clever promotion.

Ways to increase accessibility could be as simple as staging more free or budget concerts, incorporating performances of other popular music idioms such as jazz and rock, or extending the creative experience when possible to involve multi-disciplinary artistic presentations including dance, film and so on. Creative marketing needs to be applied in a manner that promotes concerts as an accessible and financially justifiable form of entertainment.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This period of intense study and observation allowed me to gain a clearer insight into effective and efficient conducting technique, rehearsal structure and concert programming, as well as the need to continually rethink and reinvent how we present and market our orchestral performances in order to keep our industry vibrant and viable as we move into the highly competitive future. Our music needs to be for the people, not just for the musicians. In order to develop and maintain a wider audience, the accessibility of our performances needs to be constantly addressed and revised.

It is my goal to implement many of the ideas and approaches that I have learnt during my fellowship where possible in my capacity as Artistic Director of the Metropolitan Chamber Orchestra (Sydney) and through upcoming professional engagements as Guest Conductor with orchestras across Australia. Additionally, I will share my knowledge with the next generation of conductors in my capacity as conducting lecturer and teacher, and as the Musical Director of the Sydney Opera House Babies Proms as well as conductor and developer other education programs for various orchestras that I work with.

I would like to see Australian conductors become leaders in the future of Australian orchestras. A significant gap that must be addressed is the lack of advanced practical, theoretical and musical training for conductors at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Currently, Australian conductors must travel abroad for this study and as a result, many of them do not return to apply this valuable learning to the Australian musical environment.

In my position as advisor with two universities, I will look into the development of advanced programs that I believe can be implemented to foster this improvement.